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SUBJECT: DEMARCHE DELIVERED: U.S. CITES PROPOSALS

¶1. (SBU) Summary. Econoff delivered reftel demarche to representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Environment, and the INCODER - the Ministry of Agriculture's fisheries management agency on January 29. Colombia will support the U.S. proposals on sharks but it has not finalized its positions on the other U.S. CITES proposals. A Colombian interagency meeting on CITES is scheduled to take place in mid-February. Colombia has not yet finalized its

delegation list but the group will be lead by the Director of Ecosystems at the Ministry of Environment. Post will report any updates on Colombia's position septel. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Econoff delivered reftel demarche in a meeting with representatives from the MFA, advisors with the Ministry of Environment and the Director and staff of INCODER on January 29. GOC officials remarked that their internal meetings on CITES may take place the week of February 8, and therefore were not able to offer official responses to U.S. CITES proposals. Econoff left talking points taken from reftel with the officials and will report Colombia's updated

positions septel. Their initial reactions to U.S. CITES proposals are below:

GOC WILL SUPPORT U.S. SHARK PROPOSALS

¶3. (SBU) Colombia will support the U.S.-Palau proposals to list the six shark species in reftel in Appendix II. The GOC notes that it recently released its first informational study under the National Shark Action Plan and also hopes to launch a fisheries observer program with technical assistance from NOAA that will help enforce shark management.

POSITION ON CORALS, POLAR BEARS, BOBCATS AND SNAKES NOT FINALIZED

¶4. (SBU) Corals: Officials at the meeting were not sure that the red and pink corals in reftel were indigenous to Colombian waters. However, they noted that Colombia has a National Coral Plan in place that protect coral reefs, and that most of the country's coral reefs are located in Colombian national parks or protected areas.

15. (SBU) Polar Bears: The GOC officials thanked Econoff for the additional information on trade of polar bear skins and parts, noting that previous information on the proposal had mostly focused on the reduction of the bears' habitat.

16. (SBU) Bobcats and Snakes: Officials from the Ministry of Environment raised one concern regarding the deletion of the bobcat from Appendix II, which is that the skin of the *Leopardus tigrinus*, a feline found in Colombia, is a look-alike of the *Lynx rufus* when the tail is removed. Econoff noted that the United States has developed a draft on-line identification guide to address some of these "look-alike" issues and passed along the web address for the guide to

interested GOC officials. GOC officials took note of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's offer to fund a workshop on snake conservation management.

DELEGATION HEAD IS DIRECTOR OF ECOSYSTEMS AT MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT

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17. (SBU) The GOC officials indicated that Colombia will send Xiomara Sanclemente, the Director of Ecosystems at the Ministry of Environment, to be the head of the Colombian delegation to CITES COP 15. The makeup of the rest of the delegation is still under discussion, but other members may include representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, INCODER, the Institute for Coastal and Marine Research (INVEMAR), and members of the scientific community from the Von

Humbolt Institute, a Colombian scientific organization.
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